

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4- 6, 8, 11-13, 15-20, 23-25, 27 and 28 are pending upon entry of this amendment. Claims 1, 8, and 17 have been amended. No new matter has been presented.

Claims 1, 4, 8, 11, 15-20 and 23 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi and Nishimura. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, recites “a braking force setting device to variably set the braking force *based on an imbalance in feeding tensions exerted upstream and downstream the tractor on the continuous paper sheet*” (emphasis added). This amendment is supported by the specification on, e.g., page 18, lines 5-12. This feature is not taught or suggested by the asserted combination.

The Examiner relies on Nishimura as allegedly teaching the claimed braking force setting device. However, Nishimura merely discloses applying a force to the paper to adjust a feeding tension detected between the paper supply and the tractors and is not related to an imbalance in feeding tensions exerted upstream and downstream the tractor on the paper. Nishimura, col. 1, lines 12-24.

Specifically, Nishimura discloses providing a number of clamper shafts 20 which are mechanically pressed on the paper sheet to adjust the tension of the paper in the lengthwise direction of the paper feeding as the paper is fed into the tractors. Nishimura, col. 3, line 64 to col. 4, line 2. Nishimura’s clamper shafts 20 loosen up the paper when tension is too high in order to prevent the feeding pins of the tractors from deforming the paper feeding apertures. Similarly, the clamper shafts 20 exert a pressing force on the paper when tension is too low in order to prevent the feeding pins of the tractors from coming out of the feeding apertures. Nishimura, col. 4, lines 3-14 and Fig. 5.

Accordingly, Nishimura’s clamper shafts 20 adjust the tension of the paper if any tension is detected in the paper as it is supplied from the paper supply to the tractors. Nishimura does not take into consideration any tension exerted on the paper downstream the tractors. Thus, there is no

teaching or suggestion in Nishimura that the force applied by the clamper shafts 20 is in any way related to an imbalance in feeding tensions exerted upstream and downstream the tractor. In fact, Nishimura does not include any rollers provided downstream the image forming device operating at a slightly higher than the tractor and therefore there is no concern in Nishimura that there would be an imbalance in feeding tensions exerted upstream and downstream the tractor on the continuous paper sheet caused by the rollers.

Accordingly, Nishimura does not teach or suggestion this feature. Claim 1 is therefore allowable. Claims 8 and 17 recite similar features as claim 1 and are similarly allowable. Claims 4, 6, 11, 15-20 and 23 are allowable for their respective dependencies from an allowable claim.

Claims 5, 12 and 24 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi, Nishimura, and Ara Yoji. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 12 and 24 depend from an allowable independent claim. Ara Yoji does not overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei, Miyakoshi, and Nishimura in teaching the features of the independent claims. In fact, Ara Yoji is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of setting the braking force according to conditions of installation environment. Thus, claims 5, 12 and 24 are allowable.

Claims 6, 13 and 25-28 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chinzei in view of Miyakoshi, Nishimura, and Wassermann. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 6, 13 and 25-28 depend from an allowable independent claim. Wassermann does not overcome the deficiencies of Chinzei, Miyakoshi, and Nishimura in teaching the features of the independent claims. In fact, Wassermann is merely relied upon by the Examiner for its alleged teachings of an evacuating device to apply a suction force to the printing paper sheet. Thus, claims 6, 13 and 25-28 are allowable.

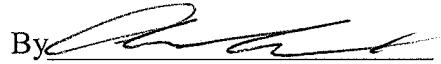
In view of the above, this application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing docket no.

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Respectfully submitted,

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